Merton might have been provoked by the patients seems to deflect some of the charge of abuse onto the abused. At the very least this argument indicates acceptance if not tolerance of a high level of violence.

Clark's other arguments are perhaps more disturbing. Besides defending his staff in a way that would tend to make any charges against them charges against their patients too, Clark attempts to discredit Merton's letter by attacking its factuality and ultimately. Some of this attack seems trivial, as when Clark denies that Merton could have spied on the Attendants through a key-hole, because "the truth is, no key hole is cut through the door of any bedroom." One might suspect Clark of prevaricating, since many of the Wards had rooms which locked by means of large keys which presumably required equally large holes; even if none of the bedrooms had locks (which seems unlikely), Merton never stipulates that the room he peered into through a key-hole was indeed a regular bedroom.

All this is trivial compared to the issue of Merton's truthfulness. Clark most devastatingly attacks the factuality of letter by implying that it, consistent with Merton's illness, is simply delusional. Ironically, given his need to make his own memories appear more accurate and truthful than Merton's, he appears to have forgotten what Merton really was committed for in 1877. Clark himself is at the very least inaccurate. From Merton's "Case History"[lxxii] and accompanying "Certificates of Insanity," Merton's problem clearly appears to have been intense and potentially suicidal depression precipitated by excessive conscientiousness about large business transactions for which he was responsible. None of his three "Certifcates" indicates a propensity for delusions or inaccuracy of any sort, let alone deliberate misrepresentation and lying. Clark's ultimate response to Merton's letter appears to have been to silence it by invoking a general dismissal of madness as delusional, at odds with the particular's of Merton's actual diagnosis. Or perhaps Clark himself was lying.

("That Bedson Bitch": Alice Bedson, Daniel Clark and a Case of "Erotomania" (1883)[lxxiii])

Perhaps one of the most glaring cases of abuse involved a patient, Alice Bedson, and Night Watch McIlroy, whose later escapades are presented from a